Inside APHIS

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The Horse Protection Act: A Rocky Road To Follow

By Jamie Ambrosi, Executive Correspondence, LPA

Imagine someone taking your fingers, rubbing them raw, dipping them in various chemicals, and placing rings around them that rub against your knuckles. Then, just when you think you've had as much pain as you can take, they ask you to tap your fingers up and down on a desk in a pitter-patter motion with the rings slapping up and down.

Now, you almost know what it's like to be a Tennessee Walking horse—but not quite. As Scott Price, an Animal Care inspector with Regulatory Enforcement and Animal Care (REAC) in Kentucky notes, "You can cry for help—a horse can't."

In enforcing the Horse Protection Act (HPA), REAC seeks to ensure that, among other breeds, the Walking horses' concerns "are heard" and that painful procedures of soring are not used to enhance the animal's gait for the purpose of winning horse shows.

The Age of Soring

As Walking horse shows began gaining prominence in the late 1930's and 1940's, winning these shows and their large purses became a coveted goal. "Trainers in the late 1940's and early 1950's began looking for a competitive edge," states REAC Associate Deputy Administrator Morley Cook. "That eventually led to the soring of horses.

"What most likely started out as a couple of horse trainers stretching the rules, soon became a widespread practice of using chains, various chemicals, and other implements of pain," explains Cook. "With the breed's gentle disposition, the training could be carried out without much struggle."

"Soon, visible evidence of soring was being noticed at the shows, especially around the coronary band above the hoof," says Richard L. Crawford, REAC's Assistant Deputy Administrator for Animal Care. "Large pieces of raw flesh and bleeding, cauliflower-like lesions were often seen on the horses' pasterns." "During the 1960's, things were out of control," Cook adds. "Soring was widespread; something had to be done."

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APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

During shows, Animal Care inspectors and Designated Qualified Persons carefully examine Walking Horses' feet for any signs of soring.

Sivramiah Shantharam Awarded Fulbright Grant

Sivramiah Shantharam, Chief of Biotechnology, Biologics, and Environmental Protection's Microorganisms Branch, has been awarded a Fulbright Grant by the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board and the United States Information Agency to present lectures and seminars in India. Shantharam specializes in environmental review and assessment of genetically engineered organisms.

Shantharam will be in New Delhi, India, from November 1, 1993, through the end of January 1994, visiting universities and national laboratories engaged in biotechnology and genetic engineering research and presenting seminars. He will also be holding miniworkshops on good developmental practices for field testing genetically engineered organisms and related biotechnology issues of environmental and biological safety. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research, the Ministry of Environment and Forests, the Department of Biotechnology, the Government of India, and Biotech Consortium India Limited are all sponsoring Shantharam's award.

Established in 1946 under Congressional legislation introduced by former Arkansas Senator J. William Fulbright, the Fulbright Program is designed to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries.

Each year, the Fulbright Program awards approximately 5,000 grants to students, teachers, and scholars in the United States and other countries. Individuals are selected for the program based on their academic and professional qualifications and their ability and willingness to share experiences with people of diverse cultures.

Scholarships are awarded through open competition, with final selections made by the Foreign Scholarship Board. Thirty-five foreign governments share in the funding of these exchanges. ◆

APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

Fulbright Grant winner Sivramiah Shantharam, Chief of Biotechnology, Biologics, and Environmental Protection's Microorganisms Branch, will present lectures and seminars in India.

Building Teamwork On and Off the Field

Quite a motley looking crew, aren't they? Actually, these employees represent the All-Star Softball Team here at headquarters. The summer softball league was comprised of teams from practically every program and players with all levels of expertise. The weekly games fostered team spirit, boosted morale, and enabled employees to meet and interact with employees in other program areas that they may not have known. It was a tight race for the championship, with Legislative and Public Affairs edging past Plant Protection and Quarantine to win two out of three games in the series.

So, what else is going on in APHIS? What other activities are being done to promote teamwork? Inside APHIS wants to hear about them. Send any photographs or information regarding your office's activities to Inside APHIS (see address to the right). ◆

APHIS PHOTO BY JOHN DUNCAN

Inside APHIS

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APHIS Mourns the Loss of Robert Melland

All of APHIS was saddened to learn of the death of former APHIS Administrator Robert B. Melland, who died on Tuesday, August 3, after a recent illness.

Melland's career with USDA began in 1987 as the Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary for Marketing and Inspection Services. In 1988, he took on the position of Deputy Assistant Secretary until 1989, when he left to become the Confidential Assistant to then APHIS Administrator James Glosser. In 1990, Melland became APHIS' Associate Administrator, and from 1991–1992, Melland was APHIS' Administrator.

Melland was a native of Jamestown, ND, and a businessman and active community member for many years prior to coming to Washington, DC. He also enjoyed a long and distinguished career in North Dakota politics and served in that State's Senate from 1966–1982.

"Mr. Melland was a dynamic and capable leader for APHIS and a strong advocate for our program in his many roles at USDA," says Acting Administrator Lonnie King.

"He always had the right words or thoughts for our employees and will be fondly remembered for his quick wit and smile, as well as for his strong commitment to APHIS and U.S. agriculture. He will be missed by us all, and we will always appreciate his charm and hard work in progressing our agenda and supporting our needs."

A memorial service for APHIS employees and friends of Melland will be held at 2:00 p.m. on September 10 at the First United Methodist Church on Belcrest Road in Hyattsville, MD.

He is survived by his wife Angie and two children.◆

Mourn Not

Mourn not for me; my time has passed.
Linger, if you will, with a memory of joy,
or the recall of a shared achievement,
or a moment of humor or hearty laughter.
But loiter not, for there is much to do.
Many hide in the shadows of life, theirs and yours,
who crave your gentle word or helping hand.
Look out for them and reach out to them.
But mourn not for me, mourn not.

Mourn not for me; my pain is gone.
But pain persists about you.
Look around and quash it in place,
conquering cause if you can.
Pain comes from body, from mind,
from circumstances and from society.
So what can you do?
Help with diseases,
find the cause and fund the cure.
Help with society,
prevent practice or public policy
that compromises conscience or morality.
But mourn not for me, mourn not.

Mourn not for me; my future's sure.
God's on His throne, His Son at His side,
fulfilling covenants and promises
that predate recorded time.
My "here" has become "hereafter,"
but you are "here" and you are "now."
Plan for your future, mortal and immortal.
Draw from the Creator's words.
Prepare yourself and others to live significantly,
die gracefully, and live eternally.
Know God better. Speak out about him.
Reflect and echo your faith, aloud and in public.
But mourn not for me, mourn not.

Bob Melland

APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

Robert Melland, former APHIS Administrator (1991–1992).

HPA from page 1

"It took the publishing of a Life magazine article on the Walking Horse industry in 1967 and similar stories in the local media to finally let the cat out of the bag regarding soring," says Price. "A coalition of veterinarians, disillusioned industry members, and humane associations also took the issue to Congress, where they got the ear of Senator Joseph Tydings," adds Cook.

The HPA: The Early Years

With Senator Tydings' backing, Congress enacted the Horse Protection Act (HPA) in 1970, giving APHIS the authority for its enforcement. "The Act outlawed the practice of soring, which includes the use of any training methods or devices that might cause a horse pain, including chemical substances, chains, rocker bars, and rollers," says Price. "All that it allowed was leather, bell-shaped boots on the lower portion of the front legs."

Despite the HPA's seemingly stringent restrictions, the Act in fact had several weaknesses which made its enforcement relatively tough. "We were supposed to examine horses for abnormal sensitivity or inflammation in the pastern area," remembers Crawford, "but we couldn't actually examine a horse unless we could prove it had crossed State lines to come to a show. We also couldn't detain horses, and we weren't provided with any protection.

"Our difficulties continued until the amendments of 1976," he adds, "when the law was toughened up. We no longer had to prove horses traveled interstate. We could start detaining horses for specified periods of time and penalties were increased. And," Crawford adds smiling, "we started using U.S. marshalls for protection."

USDA PHOTO

Walking horse shows began gaining prominence in the late 1930's early 1940's. In hopes of winning shows, trainers started using procedures, such as chains and chemicals, to sore horses and enhance their gait. Today, under the Horse Protection Act, the practice of soring is prohibited.

Adding a DQP System

"Another important development that helped in our enforcement of the Act was the creation of the designated qualified person (DQP) system," says Cook. "By certifying horse industry associations to regulate themselves and inspect for evidence of soring, we were able to increase the number of shows attended and the number of horses inspected."

To become certified under the DQP system, horse industry associations must meet certain Horse Protection regulatory requirements, and they must submit written documentation confirming their compliance with the HPA and regulations. "The association's organizational structure, penalty system, and other vital information must be covered," says Cook. "We review the information to determine whether an organization meets certification requirements."

"Show management may use DQPs to identify sore horses and relieve themselves of legal liability," says Crawford, "and REAC officials randomly inspect various Walking Horse shows each year to make sure the DQPs are doing their jobs."

"All DQPs must undergo training and demonstrate a thorough understanding of the HPA and regulations," notes Cook. "When DQPs fail to meet standards set forth in the Horse Protection regulations, action is taken through the certified organizations."

Importance of Education

In the mid-1980's, the American Horse Protection Association's (AHPA) push for stricter regulations that would outlaw the use of pads and chains further strained REAC's relationship with the Walking horse industry. After our regulations were struck down by the U.S. District Court, we went back into rulemaking," says Crawford.

Ultimately, the AHPA reached an

agreement with the Walking horse industry that allowed for the use of 6–ounce chains in training and shows instead of the 14–ounce ones that were being used at the time and established new requirements for the hoof pads.

In 1990, REAC began building a new relationship with the Walking horse industry based on education and stiffer penalties for sore horses. "At this point, we had significantly reduced the number of violators and the nature of the violations—open lesions at shows were a thing of the past," says Crawford. "So, we initiated a program to educate industry members on the negative effects of soring in addition to conducting our traditional enforcement activities," adds Price.

A big addition to the new program was John Zisk, REAC's new staff officer for Horse Protection. After coming on board in February 1992, Zisk learned the ropes quickly and, as he says, "began to forge common ground with industry representatives.

"The HPA program must be more than enforcement," continues Zisk. "It must be about open lines of communication. So far," Zisk continues, "I have been pleased with the relationship that REAC has developed with industry—it has been open and cooperative. They may not always agree with what we do, but, then again, we don't always agree with what they do either. The important thing is that there is a serious effort on behalf of most industry members to comply with the HPA and regulations."

It's impressive that plantation classes, which are walking horse classes without pads or action devices, have become a growing trend in the Walking horse industry. "However," as Crawford warns, "If we weren't here, things would most likely return to the way they were in the late 1960's." "The show's not over yet, and horses still can't speak for themselves," adds Price with a wisp of humor. ◆

APHIS PHOTO BY JAMIE AMBROSI

In addition to inspecting Walking horses at shows, Scott Price, an Animal Care inspector with Regulatory Enforcement and Animal Care (REAC) in Kentucky, strives to educate industry members on the negative effects of soring.

Effects of the National Defense Authorization Act on APHIS

By Mavis Harrison, Human Resources Operations

Applicant pools for internal vacancies (those filled through Merit Promotion) may soon grow as a result of new National Defense Authorization Act requirements.

The Act, which is intended to help displaced Federal employees find employment, requires agencies to list job vacancies being announced through their Merit Promotion program with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

Announcements that are open to candidates from outside the Department must be listed, and Merit Promotion announcements with Governmentwide areas of consideration will be submitted to OPM.

These lists of vacancies will be made available to employees displaced in the Department of Defense as well as all other Federal agencies. Through its automated Federal Employment Information System, OPM will disseminate vacancy listings through a variety of electronic systems, including touch screen computers and electronic bulletin boards.

Agency officials should be aware that vacancies open to outside candidates will also be publicized by OPM. These outside vacancy announcements should be open for at least 2 weeks to allow applicants adequate time to obtain forms and submit applications.

Agency officials should also remember that, as with any Merit Promotion vacancy announcement, it is assumed that relocation costs will be paid, unless otherwise stated on the vacancy announcement. To ensure that such a statement appears on the vacancy announcement, requesting offices should include the remark on their recruitment SF-52 (Request for Personnel Action).

Contact your Servicing Personnel Assistant for additional information about publicizing Merit Promotion announcements. ◆

Dale F. Schwindaman—Keeping REAC on the Right Track

By Kim Taylor, Executive Correspondence, LPA

In Dale Schwindaman's view, frequent and open communication between Regulatory Enforcement and Animal Care (REAC) headquarters and field personnel—together with the program's amplified investigative and enforcement efforts, educational initiatives, and a truly committed workforce—is helping to achieve the program's goals of increasing compliance with the laws under APHIS' jurisdiction and promoting the humane treatment of animals.

"I see APHIS, and REAC in particular, at the forefront of the overall movement toward governmental change being endorsed by the new Administration," says Schwindaman, "and I'm proud to be associated with such a progressive organization."

Indeed, while "change" may be just the latest political buzzword to some, Schwindaman and his staff have long espoused the benefits of certain nontraditional, employee–oriented management structures and the importance of freely exchanging information. "I have believed for many years that, if employees feel a sense of ownership toward the organization and have input into the things they do at work each day, they are much more likely to support management decisions and be effective in performing their jobs," he says.

Implementing self-directed work teams at the sector office level is another possibility being considered.

Controversies R Us

As a result of heightened public sensitivity to animal welfare issues over the past few decades, the Animal Care (AC) side of REAC is a frequent target of media scrutiny and often the focus of intense criticism.

"We have received volumes of mail and telephone calls, both at headquarters and the sector offices, concerning U.S. District Court Judge Charles R. Richey's February 25 decision, which states that APHIS must revise the current Animal Welfare Act (AWA) standards governing the treatment of dogs and primates used in laboratory experiments," says Schwindaman.

If upheld, the Court's ruling would require APHIS to develop more specific (design–based) standards to replace the performance–based or result–oriented standards currently being enforced. In general, animal protection organizations favor the decision. However, the appropriateness, feasibility, and cost implications of more stringent AWA regulations concern many researchers.

The Department of Justice filed a notice of appeal on the ruling on April 26, and USDA officials are currently working with Justice officials to determine how to proceed with the appeal. APHIS expects a decision on the matter shortly.

". . . REAC is committed to enforcing the AWA and the Horse Protection Act to the full extent of our regulatory authorities."

Dale Schwindaman

Justice officials are also appealing another Richey decision. This decision, if upheld, would greatly expand APHIS' regulatory authority by including rats, mice, and birds under the AWA. An oral hearing on the appeal will take place in September.

Schwindaman believes that, given the nationwide interest in animal welfare concerns and the growing influence of animal protection groups, Congress will continue to introduce legislation on a wide array of animal welfare topics. One such bill recently introduced would amend the Marine Mammal Protection Act by proposing stricter AWA standards for the living conditions, care, and psychological well–being of these mammals. While the legislation has not yet come up for a vote, APHIS published a notice in the July 23 Federal Register soliciting comments and expressing the Agency's intent to consider revising the current AWA standards for marine mammals.

"I think the message is getting across to animal protection groups, regulated entities, and the general public that REAC is committed to enforcing the AWA and the Horse Protection Act to the full extent of our regulatory authorities," says Schwindaman. "At the same time, I'm a firm believer in lending an open ear to the concerns of all groups."

Education Is Key to REAC's Mission

Under Schwindaman's leadership, REAC personnel are becoming more involved in a number of proactive outreach programs with various stakeholders, including members of the research and zoo communities, the commercial transport industry, the veterinary medical profession, and animal protection organizations.

REAC employees are also being represented on and working with committees of the American Veterinary Medical Association, the United States Animal Health Association, the International Association for Aquatic Animal Medicine, and the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums (AAZPA). In fact, the AC staff initiated an Exhibition Animal Internship pilot program last year using curriculum developed in cooperation with AAZPA. The program provides specialized training for two AC employees annually in exhibition–animal husbandry and management. The employees spend varying amounts of time at AAZPA–member institutions working with the staff and studying the operations and management of zoos and aquariums.

"We're looking at other possibilities to increase our outreach."

Dale Schwindaman

"I'm encouraged by the great opportunity these educational forums provide to exchange ideas on humane treatment issues and increase the effectiveness of our enforcement efforts," says Schwindaman. "We're looking at other possibilities along these lines to increase our outreach."

Regulatory Enforcement: The Long Arm of the Law

Schwindaman also anticipates that Regulatory Enforcement's role as the investigative branch of APHIS will significantly expand in the future. "We are receiving more and more requests from various units within the Agency to provide investigative services, and we are making every effort to meet these growing needs."

During fiscal year (FY) 1992, the RE field staff conducted 851 compliance investigations for AC; 326 for PPQ; 1,686 for Veterinary Services (VS); and 32 for Biotechnology, Biologics, and Environmental Protection. In carrying out their investigative activities, RE personnel work closely with program officials, accompanying them on inspections and requesting their assistance in compiling the information needed to build cases.

Schwindaman cites a recent AWA case involving a USDA-licensed dealer and two kennel operators who fraudulently obtained dogs and sold them to research facilities as a good example of the teamwork ethic in action. (See May/June issue of Inside APHIS.) After a yearlong investigation by RE Field Investigator Gregg G. Nelson and AC Veterinary Medical Officer Robert Willems, class B dealer David and Tracy Stephens, the owners of D&T Kennels in Lebanon, OR, and an accomplice, Brenda Linville, were arrested and charged with conspiring to illegally obtain and sell pet dogs for medical research and for defrauding the USDA.

On February 22, the U.S. District

(See SCHWINDAMAN on page 13)

"We are receiving more and more requests from various units within the Agency to provide investigative services . . . ."

Dale Schwindaman

APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

Dale F. Schwindaman began his career in agriculture on a farm in Kansas, where he was born and raised. He received both his Bachelor of Science and Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degrees from Kansas State University and completed his academic requirements for Master of Science degree in Animal Science from the University of Delaware. Before entering the Air Force Veterinary Corps, where he served 2 years, Schwindaman operated a dairy practice in Wisconsin.

Since joining APHIS, Schwindaman has held various positions in both Regulatory Enforcement and Animal Care (REAC) and Veterinary Services (VS). He was Delaware's Veterinarian–in–Charge for 2 years before joining headquarter's Animal Care staff as Chief Staff Veterinarian. From 1985–1986, he served as Acting Assistant Director of VS' National Program Planning Staff. After a brief stint (January 1989-December 1989) as REAC's Assistant Deputy Administrator, Schwindaman took on the position of VS' Western Regional Director. He returned to head REAC as Deputy Administrator in October 1992.

Proving a Point—U.S. Poultry Is Healthy

By Tom Cramer, Operational Support, VS

APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

Poultry in the United States falls into basically two areas: the backyard flock industry and the commercial poultry industry. The backyard flock industry consists of people raising and chickens, ducks, and other poultry on their property and selling them to dealers, and the commercial poultry industry is made up of producers who raise and process millions of birds assembly–line style for the American consumer and international markets.

How do you convince other countries that the U.S. poultry population is healthy and free of disease and that it's OK to import the birds and their products?

That was the dilemma Veterinary Services (VS) was facing back in March when Venezuela and Colombia decided to stop importing all U.S. poultry and poultry products. At the time, both countries firmly believed that the United States was having a problem with highly pathogenic avian influenza—an acute, highly infectious and contagious viral disease of poultry.

According to Michael David, a Senior Staff Veterinarian with VS' National Center for Import and Export (NCIE) in Hyattsville, MD, there was no problem with avian influenza in commercial flocks. In fact, there hasn't been an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza in commercial poultry flocks in the United States for at least 8 years.

Avian influenza viruses have a worldwide distribution and are frequently recovered from migrating waterfowl and poultry associated with live–bird markets. Most strains of the avian influenza virus do not cause significant disease and are of low pathogenicity. However, certain strains have the potential to cause severe disease. These are the highly pathogenic strains that can cause fowl plague.

There hasn't been an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza in commercial poultry flocks for at least 8 years.

In early January of this year, serological evidence of exposure to avian influenza was discovered in turkeys in Pennsylvania during routine laboratory screening procedures. Further surveillance uncovered evidence of the virus in several live–bird markets in New York and Philadelphia and in a couple of backyard flocks in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. However, David says such incidents do not qualify as avian influenza outbreaks.

While the virus that was isolated from these live–bird poultry markets was demonstrated to be nonpathogenic, it was a strain that had the potential for mutating into one that was pathogenic.

Therefore, Pennsylvania and the surrounding States of New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland immediately took some precautions. Specifically, the States required poultry from backyard flocks to be tested before being trucked to auction markets or live–bird markets in the city. (These States removed the testing requirement on June 1.) However, upon learning that the avian influenza virus had been isolated in the United States, Colombia and Venezuela imposed a ban on all U.S. poultry.

"It was in the backyard flocks and live–bird markets that the nonpathogenic avian influenza virus was isolated."

Michael David

In response, NCIE veterinarians began thinking about how they could convince officials from Colombia and Venezuela that there really wasn't an avian influenza problem in the United States.

"Our main task was to show the Colombians and Venezuelans the very distinct differences between the two poultry industries," says David. "There is the commercial poultry industry, and then there is the backyard flock industry. The backyard flock industry consists of people who raise chickens, ducks, and other poultry on their property and sell them to dealers, who in turn take the birds to live–bird markets. It was in these backyard flocks and live–bird markets that the nonpathogenic avian influenza virus was isolated.

"Then, there is the United States commercial poultry industry," says David, "which includes those

producers who produce millions and millions of birds and process them, assembly-line style, for the American consumer and for international markets. "We have not found any evidence of the avian influenza virus in these birds," says David, "or evidence that any commercial birds have been exposed to the virus.

"We wanted to stress to officials of Colombia and Venezuela that evidence of the avian influenza virus had been found in only backyard flocks, and State Governments, the Federal Government, and the commercial poultry industry had taken great pains to ensure there was no intermingling of backyard birds with commercial birds.

"We knew that, unless Colombian and Venezuelan officials could get a firsthand look at how our system works, they would continue their ban on U.S. poultry," says David. So, USDA and poultry industry officials invited Colombian and Venezuelan veterinary officials to check out the poultry industry here in the United States.

Epidemiologist Mairo Urbina and poultry pathologist Franciso Bustos from the Colombian Livestock Institute and the director and assistant director of Venezuela's Division of Animal Health, William Sequera and Alberto Romero, came to the United States. David, who speaks fluent Spanish, was USDA's representative and served as interpreter and technical advisor.

The 3-day tour of the poultry industries began on May 18, when the group visited some commercial hatcheries, poultry houses, and processing facilities on the Delmarva Peninsula in Delaware. The group also visited backyard flocks, an auction market, the diagnostic laboratories in Pennsylvania, and a live-bird market in Philadelphia.

"We wanted them to see that there are two distinct marketing channels in the United States," says David. "We wanted them to personally observe our disease surveillance system, the biosecurity measures, and other precautions that the industry implemented to ensure that no intermingling occurs between these two marketing channels."

APHIS' efforts to reassure the Columbian and Venezuelan representatives did bring about some positive results. In late July, Colombia lifted their restrictions on U.S. live poultry and hatching eggs. However, Venezuela has yet to do so, though David and the NCEI staff are still hopeful.◆

APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

To reassure Colombia and Venezuela that the commerical poultry being exported to their countries is free of the avian influenza virus, VS invited representatives of the countries on a tour of commercial and backyard flock industry facilities.

O'Hare Terminal Opens to Overwhelming Ovations

By Anna Cherry, Public Information, LPA

It was a packed house at Chicago O'Hare International Airport on May 27. No, there wasn't a special on frequent flier mileage points, and the crowds weren't waiting for a flight. They were there to celebrate the opening of a new international terminal at the airport.

Why celebrate the opening of a new airport terminal? "The opportunity for the growth of international travel in Chicago will be tremendous because of this new terminal," says Senior Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) Officer Laura Ettema. "The terminal can process 4,000 passengers per hour and will allow us to service the traveling public so much better."

An interterminal transit system, electronic signs that can carry messages in 17 languages, free luggage carts, several Chicago-style eateries, and 21 terminal gates are all part of the new, 1.2 million square foot, state-of-the-art terminal. Artwork from Chicago's 12 sister cities all over the world, including Casablanca, Morocco, and Shanghai, will cover the terminal walls.

The PPQ secondary inspection area in the terminal is equipped with two x-ray machines and accomodations for two more, a canine room, an identifier's lab, a large disposal room, a room on the baggage floor for baggage violations and cargo manifests, and modern, spacious offices, including a training room and break room. Chicago Officer in Charge Tony Drobnik worked with airport authorities to ensure PPQ's quarters were comfortable and would allow for growth and expansion.

More than 30 people, including representatives from each of the Federal inspection service agencies (USDA, Customs, Immigration, Fish and Wildlife, and the Public Health Service), the airlines, the local trade unions, and dignitaries, such as Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley and U.S. Transportation Secretary Fredrico Peña, helped cut the ribbon to open the terminal. Ettema represented APHIS at the ribbon cutting. PPQ Northeast Regional Director Don Husnik and Assistant Regional Director Sonja Dabulis also attended the festivities, as did several PPQ officers and canine Sparky.◆

Safety Symposium Looks at Workplace Safety

APHIS PHOTO BY RICHARD TYNER

Acting APHIS Administrator Lonnie King (left) presents William A. Carman, a VS Supervisory Biological Laboratory Technician, with the Safety and Health Employee of the Year award at the 6th National APHIS Safety and Health Symposium.

"Workplace Safety—Make It Happen" was the focus of this year's 6th National APHIS Safety and Health Symposium, which was held in Minneapolis, MN, from July 26–30. The 4–day symposium was sponsored by the National APHIS Safety and Health Council and the Midwest Center for Occupational Health and Safety, which offers core graduate training programs and continuing education courses in the field of occupational health and safety.

"This year's symposium was the most informative one yet," says Charolette Henry, Chairperson of the National APHIS Safety and Health Committee. Citing surveys of the symposium Henry adds, "Attendees commented that this year's speakers and presenters were extremely dynamic and addressed the pertinent topic of safety and health in the workplace."

Undoubtedly, the most talked about symposium presentation was an innovative theater production entitled "Violence in the Workplace—Unless There's Blood." Actors, Mary Sue Moses and Alfred Harrison, from the Theater for Corporate and Community Education, performed four skits depicting various dilemmas facing today's workers. The purpose of the performances was to emphasize the detrimental effects of abuse at home and in the workplace.

Other symposium highlights included a tour of a General Mills facility to observe safety and health concerns in private industry and an ergonomics presentation on how to develop a work environment that fits the worker. Michael Hornyak, Officer in Charge of Plant Protection and Quarantine's (PPQ) Miami Inspection Station, gave an impressive visual presentation on disaster preparedness and recovery, using slides of Hurricane Andrew and its devastating effects.

Equally interesting was the presentation by George Hartson, Claims Specialist with the Field Servicing Office, on tort claims and how they can affect Agency employees.

All symposium attendees gathered mid–week to honor employees and units for their outstanding achievements in the areas of safety and health. Acting APHIS Administrator Lonnie King was the guest speaker at the ceremony and handed out the awards along with Henry.

Employee of the Year

The reasons for William A. Carman's being named the Safety and Health Employee of the Year are many. Carman, a Supervisory Biological Laboratory Technician with Veterinary Services (VS) in Georgia, was recognized for his efforts in support of the fiscal year 1992 APHIS Safety and Health Program. Highlights of his accomplishments include, researching, selecting, and securing protective gloves for use by field personnel when tail bleeding cattle and special rubber boots for working in hog pens. He also developed and built hog boards to protect Georgia's field personnel from hog bites, secured and provided highly visible day/night vests for employees working at airport facilities, and obtained and recommended a ramp safety instruction program for all personnel with access to airport facilities.

Collateral Duty Safety and Health Officer of the Year

Total wellness and vehicle safety were two areas targeted this year by Clement A. Dussalt, Collateral Duty Safety and Health Officer and Veterinary Medical Officer with Regulatory Enforcement and Animal Care's (REAC) Northeast Sector. Believing that healthy employees are better employees, Dussalt organized stress management training and recommended that healthy snacks be provided for future work conference meetings. He also instigated a training session for the entire sector on routine Government–owned vehicle maintenance.

Defensive Driving

Lewis R. Stiles, Jr. with VS' Central Region is what most of us would consider a driving wonder. He has not had a motor vehicle accident or been cited for a moving violation on or off duty for at least the past 5 years. Stiles has also driven a total of 61,000 accident-free miles during the past fiscal year alone. It's no wonder he was presented with the Defensive Driver Award for 1992.

Unit of the Year

Promoting safety both at work and in the home is the goal of VS' Oklahoma Area Office, the winner of the Safety and Health Unit of the Year. For the workplace, the Oklahoma office provided employees with personal protective equipment, such as disposable ear protection while bleeding swine, back brace belts to reduce back stress, leather working gloves to reduce hand injuries, and steel mesh gloves for veterinarians conducting post-mortem examinations. The office also carried its message of safety to the community, providing information on, among other things, home fire protection, safe swimming programs, and safe handling of tools.

APHIS Motor Vehicle Statistics

Approximately 30 percent of all deaths in the United States are the result of car accidents. Every 22 minutes someone is killed in a car crash, and every 2 minutes a crash injures someone severely enough to require hospital treatment. These statistics are very powerful and quite an incentive to drive smart and safe. Considering all the traveling required of APHIS employees, how did APHIS drivers fare in fiscal year (FY) 1992?

- APHIS employees were involved in a total of 181 motor vehicle accidents in FY 1992.
- APHIS employees traveled 52.2 million miles in FY 1992 with only 3.4 accidents per million miles.
- Only six APHIS employees were injured in FY 1992 as a result of a vehicle accident; there were no fatalities.
- Approximately 79 percent of APHIS drivers buckled up when driving on the job in FY 1992. (Programs are continuously striving for more.)

These motor vehicle statistics for FY 1992 were taken from information compiled by Richard Tyner, Management Analyst with Management and Budget's Safety, Health, and Environmental Section.

Special Achievements

Two APHIS employees were honored this year with Special Achievement Awards for performing life-saving acts—Sturgis A. Robinson and Higinio Gutierrez, Animal Health Technicians with VS' Central Region. Robinson was recognized for performing the Heimlich procedure on colleague Austin Knox, who was choking while eating lunch; Gutierrez rescued a child from a vat filled with 7 feet of pesticide.

Victor Withee, Michael Hornyak, Jerry Russo, and Will James from PPQ's Southeastern Region also received a Special Achievement Award for the development of a Hurricane Emergency Plan.

Certificate of Appreciation

Certificates of Appreciation were awarded to Kathleen M. Garland (REAC), the John F. Kennedy International Airport Bird Hazard Reduction Unit, the Animal Damage Control Eastern Region, and VS' Western Region. ◆

APHIS Headquarters to Relocate to Riverdale, MD

It's official. The General Services Administration (GSA) has signed a lease for the new APHIS Headquarters Complex. It is a 10-year lease with a 10-year renewal option and an option to buy after 20 years. The building will be located at 4700 River Road in Riverdale, MD. In accordance with a supplemental lease agreement with Prince George's Center, APHIS will remain in the Federal Building during the new complex's construction but must be completely vacated within 18 months.

APHIS' new home will have six floors, with APHIS occupying primarily the second through fifth floors. According to Gene Skinner, a Headquarter's Relocation Project Leader, the new complex owner is planning to provide various amenities, such as an eating facility, automated teller machine, and perhaps even a drycleaning shop. Other accommodations planned for the new complex include a daycare facility, a physical fitness facility, employee lounges, conference rooms, an auditorium, a video conference center, and a multiple-purpose training center.

As for other neighbors, the American Center for Physics should be moving to Riverdale in the fall. The Center will combine the American Institute of Physics, the American Physical Society, and the American Associations of Physics Teachers.

Employees should find the new APHIS complex to be very accessible—only about 2,000 feet from the College Park Metro stop currently under construction on Calvert Street. The building owner has also agreed to provide a free shuttle service between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. daily so employees can get to nearby restaurants and shops in the Riverdale area.

Look for continued updates from the Headquarter Relocation Project Office as the construction on the new complex progresses. ◆

Social Security—You Get What You Pay for, and More

By Debra Busch, Human Resources Operations

If you are an employee under the Federal Employees Retirement System or a temporary employee, did you know that right now you are earning disability insurance, survivors benefits, a retirement program, and future Medicare coverage. It's all paid for by the Social Security taxes withheld from your paycheck—and matched dollar for dollar by your employer.

Now, you can find out just what those taxes are earning for you. It's easy to do, and it's free! Just call 1-800-772-1213 and ask for a Personal Earnings and Benefit Estimate Statement Request Form.

Send in the completed form, and approximately 6 weeks later you will receive a complete history of your earnings, the Social Security taxes you've paid, and estimates of what you and your family could receive in Social Security retirement, disability, and survivors benefits. If there are any errors or omissions in your earnings record, Social Security will help you correct them. ◆

Churning Out the Corn

By Anna Cherry, Public Information, LPA

According to the U.S. Feed Grains Council, the United States is the leading producer of corn in the world and will produce 46 percent of the world total in 1993. In light of this fact, it's not surprising that the United States exports large quantities of corn.

In June, the 50–billionth bushel of corn was exported to Japan, the United States' biggest corn customer, since USDA began keeping records 136 years ago in 1876.

The U.S. Feed Grains Council brought the bushel to the Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) offices in Hyattsville, MD, for inspection and phytosanitary certification. The bushel contained kernels from each of the 16 major corn-producing States.

Having trouble picturing 50 billion bushels of corn? Well, that much corn would fill almost 4 million pickup trucks and make almost 2 trillion 1–pound boxes of cereal flakes. ◆

APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

PPQ Assistant Operations Officer Jonathan Jones (left), International Services' Ralph Iwamoto (right), who will be APHIS' Plant Health Attache in Japan as of September, and Thomas N. Sleight, Executive Director of the U.S. Feed Grains Council surround the 50–billionth bushel of corn exported from the United States since 1876.

Media Border Blitz Spreads AQI Message in Texas

By Roberta McCorkle, Public Information, LPA

"Avoid Fines! Declare" and "Don't Buy Smuggled Fruit! Protect American Agriculture" are two messages that greet travelers and residents in Texas along the Mexico border these days. Six strategically placed billboards remind those using major highways to comply with U.S. agricultural quarantine laws. The billboards are part of a public awareness campaign conducted by Plant Protection and Quarantine's (PPQ) Central Region and Legislative and Public Affairs' (LPA) Public Information staff to increase quarantine awareness and compliance.

"Many people entering the United States don't realize that one piece of fruit carried across the border has the potential to cause vast damage to U.S. agriculture," says Director of PPQ's Central Region Robert Williamson.

"In El Paso, where our problem is smuggled fruit, people are purchasing fruit from unlicensed street vendors, not realizing they are contributing to the problem."

In addition to leasing the billboards, 50 PPQ and LPA employees conducted a variety of public awareness activities in Brownsville, Progreso, Hidalgo, Roma, Laredo and El Paso, TX, during a 3-week period this summer. Dubbed a "media border blitz," the awareness campaign included, among other things, inviting American and Hispanic media to visit ports where officers inspected pedestrians and vehicles. LPA representatives provided public service announcements to radio stations and newspapers, and teams of LPA and PPQ officials spoke to civic groups and to members of the public during several open houses. LPA's Larry Hawkins, John Rodriguez, and Joyce Mims helped prepare PPQ employees for the media spotlight.

APHIS PHOTO BY JOHN RODRIGUEZ

Billboards spouting the messages "Avoid Fines! Declare" and Don't Buy Smuggled Fruit! Protect American Agriculture" were leased along major highways to remind travelers and residents in Texas and Mexico to comply with U.S. agricultural quarantine laws.

"The hard work everyone put in before the blitz really paid off," says PPQ El Paso Officer in Charge John Vigil. "My folks were especially thrilled to see those big, colorful billboards go up."

"I think we all learned a lot this year," said LPA's John Rodriguez, who coordinated the effort. "In many ways we were pleasantly surprised by the positive response we got from the media and public along the border. We hope to increase our focus next year to include the border in Arizona and California."◆

Schwindaman from page 7

Court in Eugene, OR, sentenced David Stephens to 10 months in prison and 2 months of home detention. Tracy Stephens received 3 years of probation, 1 of which was to be served by home detention, and Brenda Linville received 8 months in prison and 2 months of home detention. David Stephens and Brenda Linville are currently appealing their sentences.

For less serious cases, Schwindaman believes that stipulation agreements have been a helpful enforcement tool in RE's efforts to obtain compliance from regulated parties. These agreements allow alleged violators to pay a fine and avoid court proceedings, which could result in additional fines and suspension. They seem to be greatly reducing the number of cases being forwarded to the Office of General Counsel for possible prosecution through administrative procedures.

As for future RE initiatives, Schwindaman predicts that investigators will probably make more frequent use of covert or "sting," operations and surveillance activities. "These types of operations have been very successful in the past," he says. "In fact, we are currently monitoring midwestern trade days, flea markets, and other venues because we have received reports that bunchers at these events may be stealing dogs and cats and selling them to licensed dealers or to research facilities. I'll be very interested to learn of the findings when the investigation is finished."

Schwindaman concludes by stating, "I strongly believe that the public needs to know that our personnel are carrying out the laws and regulations under our jurisdiction, and that we are committed to what we do." From all the evidence, it appears that REAC is achieving that goal and much more.◆

Heroes in the Plant Pest World

By Catherine Morse, Executive Correspondence, LPA

APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

PPQ officers immediately intercept all pests found on products entering the country, identify them, and verify whether the pests are of quarantine significance. To identify a plant pest, PPQ officials in the field rely on their experience, specimen collections, and the library of information they maintain and continuously develop.

When asked what plant pests are, many reply, "Oh, that's a bug." Bug. What a small and simple word we use to describe a complex and costly pest of U.S. agriculture.

Contrary to popular belief, the term plant pest can also refer to plant diseases, noxious weed seeds, nematodes (parasitic worms), and mollusks (snails and slugs). Dedicated Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) officers search for these plant pests, which can be nestled in the leaves of imported produce, buried inside wood products, or hidden deep in the petals of fresh cut flowers.

Once a pest is intercepted, PPQ identifiers press their eyes to microscopes and bury their noses in books until they are able to provide a name for the unknown pest. The identifiers may also administer or oversee the application of pesticide treatments and even conduct inspections when required.

Identifiers, which include entomologists (insect specialists), plant pathologists (plant disease specialists), and botanists (plant specialists), are stationed at large U.S. ports and assigned to specific field offices across the United States.

"There's rarely any down time in this work," reflects entomologist Joe Cavey, who is stationed in Baltimore, MD, and handles pest identification for PPQ field offices in five States.

"Long, odd hours are routine for us," adds Susan Broda-Hydorn, the entomologist responsible for the areas of Miami, FL, and the Bahamas. "We handle the late and early arrivals of ships and international passenger and air cargo flights, which are packed with exotic propagated plants and produce."

Despite the tough hours and the overall pressure to protect our country's agriculture from plant pests that could cause costly damage, PPQ identifiers are dedicated, patient people with great stamina.

Though black spots on a leaf, a small brown body with microscopic legs crawling up the stalk of a flower, or tiny weed seeds may not alarm most people, PPQ officers are trained to notice if any of those details warrant quarantine action.

PPQ officers immediately intercept all pests found on products entering the country and verify whether the pests are of quarantine significance, which means that the organism is not known to occur in the United States or is widely established in the United States and

APHIS PHOTO

Plant Protection and Quarantine identifiers, including entomologists, plant pathologists, and botanists, utilize all available resources to identify intercepted plant pests. In those cases where no pertinent reference material is available on a specimen, identifiers refer the specimen to national identifiers and other experts.

is known to be or has the potential to be an agricultural pest.

PPQ officials process an average of 40,000 quarantine-significant organisms annually; more than 300,000 such organisms have been processed since 1985. Depending on the nature of the pest found, the host commodity is either prohibited entry, treated, or released without treatment.

Importers are very interested in PPQ inspections. Every minute importer's ships and/or airplanes await inspection by PPQ officials and any subsequent decision on the shipments' ability to enter the United States, their shipping costs rise. Often PPQ inspectors and identifiers are roused out of bed during dark hours of the early morning to deal with incoming shipments or cargo.

If a plant pest is discovered, particularly on commercial cargo, an identifier regards it as "urgent," and other work is put on hold until the organism is identified. "Urgent" pests are usually found in areas such as airports, seaports, the Mexican border, and offshore areas like Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

Everyone is happiest when no plant pests are discovered. Unfortunately, that is the exception and not the rule. Not only does the introduction of harmful plant pests negatively impact the health of U.S. agriculture, it also threatens both foreign and domestic trade markets. As a result, inspectors recognize the importance of preventing the introduction of costly pests in this country and look for specific, high-risk plant pests.

In looking for plant pests, PPQ officials have found the exotic khapra beetle, which is capable of destroying grains, in unusual places—wiggling through large bags of chili peppers and other food supplies on ships and even curled up in tubes of toothpaste on air cargo flights. Inspectors also find gypsy moth egg masses stuck to the stern or bow of a ship. Mediterranean fruit flies (Medfly), one of the world's most destructive agricultural pests, lay their eggs in the soft skin of fruit. Often, the sweet aroma of exotic fruits—such as Brazilian mangos or Colombian papayas—fills rooms where our inspectors carefully slice through pieces of intercepted fruit in search of Medfly and other harmful larvae.

APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

A careful eye is needed by Plant Protection and Quarantine identifiers to spot plant pests on products entering the United States. If introduced into this country, many of these pests could cause costly damage to U.S. agriculture.

To identify a plant pest, identifiers in the field rely on their experience, specimen collections, and the library of information that they maintain and continuously develop. An identifier's library may include records of interceptions, taxonomy of plant pests, their hosts, their distribution, or other related information. However, in those cases where no pertinent reference material is available on a specimen, identifiers refer the specimen to national identifiers and other experts.

"We also work closely with the USDA's Agricultural Research Service, which maintains the largest group of scientists and collection of plant diseases, noxious weed seeds, and insects in the world," says Rebecca Bech, Branch Chief of PPQ's Biological Assessment and Taxonomic Support program's National Identification Branch. If PPQ identifiers cannot identify an "urgent" specimen in the field, officials in Hyattsville direct it to the appropriate expert for identification. Those results are expected within 24 hours.

The PPQ identifiers' devotion to their work is evident, and it is inspiring for anyone who has the opportunity to see them in action. Bug. That little word cannot do justice to the intricate nature of the plant pest world. ◆

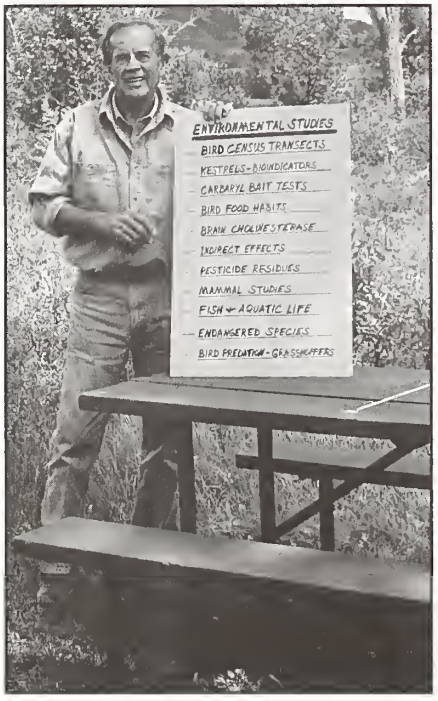
Grasshoppers Have a Field Day in North Dakota

By Janet Wintermute, Media Services, LPA

There are a few things you need to know about North Dakota. First of all, it's not flat. Somebody ironed all those maps of the Great Plains you saw in school.

When I visited the Grasshopper Integrated Pest Management (GHIPM) Project's biennial "field day" demonstrations on July 21, I found rolling hills from horizon to horizon. They were covered with chartreuse forage—green that late in the year solely because of the Flood of '93. The black dots were beef cattle.

But cows don't have those hills to themselves. In a "bad" grasshopper year, 30 or more Melanoplus sanguinipes and their relatives munch away on that forage. That's



APHIS PHOTO BY JANET WINTERMUTE

GHIPM-funded investigator Lowell McEwen shows field day visitors what his work on kestrels is all about.

APHIS PHOTO BY JANET WINTERMUTE

Keeping track of Lowell McEwen's birdies is virtually a 'round-the-clock commitment. Here, Glenda Schleve (right), a Colorado State graduate student, and her assistant, Becky Terwilliger (University of Nebraska), hold a pair of month-old kestrel chicks they have just removed from the nest box above the ladder. Because grasshoppers are a favored food of kestrels, their health and reproductive success are one "bioindicator" of how spraying insecticides affects the environment.

30+ hoppers per square meter (or 10.8 per square foot)! The GHIPM Project has been working on that problem scenario since 1987. Project Director Gary Cunningham is guiding a multimillion dollar research effort to develop ways to reduce hopper populations below economically damaging levels.

Every other summer, Cunningham and a dozen or so researchers invite North Dakota ranchers to visit with Project personnel and learn about the research that can help them lessen the impact of rangeland grasshoppers on their operations. Nearly 80 Federal and State officials, land managers, Extension employees, and local ranchers came to this year's field day, held on a Project demonstration site near Watford City, ND.

One of the most interesting demonstrations showed attendees how military technology can be adapted for agricultural use. Remember how, during the Gulf War, U.S. missiles delivered bombs down the chimneys of intended target buildings? That kind of accuracy was possible because of the Federal Government's development of "global positioning system" (GPS) technology.

American missiles were guided to their targets by locking onto latitude and longitude information beamed

APHIS PHOTO BY MIKE SAMPSON

Hoppers are hard to count, but accurate figures on population density are essential to the go–no go spraying decision. Here, PPQ officer Wendal Cushing counts 'hoppers in a metal ring. These counts are extrapolated to a bugs–per–square–meter figure. The insects are counted before and after insecticide treatments to test the efficacy of various application rates.

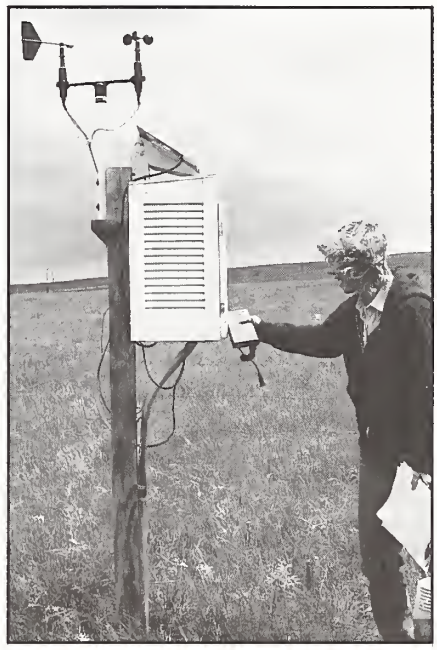
to Earth from 24 satellites in orbit at 11,000 miles up. Though the war is over, those taxpayer–funded satellites are still working 24 hours a day. Arizona's SATLOC Inc. has found a way to use their signals for parallel swathing for aerial spray operations.

Company president Joe Hartt showed field day attendees how agricultural aircraft can be guided by GPS so that pilots drop chemicals on target fields without the use of flaggers to guide the planes.

The advantages are obvious. No waiting in the sky while the flaggers drive or walk to new locations. And no spraying them with toxicants. Furthermore, SATLOC's software provides an onscreen real–time image of where the pilot has flown and when the chemicals left the plane. Printouts can be made any time later—for instance, when the Government needs to respond to a lawsuit alleging that homes or bodies of water were accidentally sprayed with pesticides. The onboard computer screen displays how far the plane has strayed off the intended spray line so the pilot can make fine adjustments and ensure that the whole field was sprayed.

This technology was used operationally in boll weevil control efforts in west Texas last year. This year, during the week of July 12, Plant Protection and Quarantine's (PPQ) chief pilot, Tim Roland, set up a 6,400–acre demonstration plot near Watford City to test the SATLOC system for grasshopper control. At the field day, Kent Taylor, a commercial spray pilot from Watford City, flew part of the test block again to demonstrate the setup.

Other field day discussions centered on the "HOPPER" decision–support software developed by Project–funded scientists, weather–monitoring equipment with remote data–collection, the influence of grazing on forage growth, biological control studies, and environmental studies involving eagles and kestrels. ◆



APHIS PHOTO BY JANET WINTERMUTE

In some years, grasshopper populations skyrocket. Here, inside a barbed-wire enclosure on the open prairie, Agricultural Research Service technician Selene Gaffri uses a hand-held data-collection device to capture information from a permanent weather-monitoring station. GHIPM investigators hope to learn what conditions favor/disfavor grasshopper success.

PPQ Battles Euonymus Scale in Baltimore's Inner Harbor

There's a war going on in Baltimore's Inner Harbor; it's a biological war. On June 16, Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) troops—agriculturist Mike Bryan, Chief Operations Officer for Biological Control Operations Dale Meyerdirk, and Port of Baltimore Officer in Charge Jeff Grode—gathered at the request of Baltimore's Chief Horticulturist Gerard Moudry to do battle.

Their mission? To release natural enemies, the parasite *Encarsia* near *diaspidicola* and the predator *Chilocous kuwanae*, in a hedge of euonymus bushes infested with the plant's primary insect pest, the euonymus scale, which is an exotic pest from China.

PPQ officials anticipate that these two exotic natural enemies, which were imported from China, will become established and spread to surrounding bushes, thereby controlling the infestation biologically without the use of chemicals.

If left alone, the euonymus scale infestation would eventually kill the bushes.

APHIS, along with State and university cooperators, is involved in implementing biological control programs for euonymus scale in 35 States. ◆

APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

Photo above: In hopes of biologically controlling an infestation of euonymus scale, PPQ officials release a vial of minute parasites, *Encarsia* near *diaspidicola*, in the leaves of an euonymus bush. APHIS, along with State and university cooperators, is involved in implementing euonymus scale biological control programs in 35 States.

Photo right: Mike Bryan (right), PPQ agriculturist, and Chief Baltimore Horticulturist Gerard Moudry release the euonymus scale predator *Chilocorus kuwanae* in euonymus bushes around Baltimore's Inner Harbor. Both this species and the *Encarsia* near *diaspidicola*, which originated in China, were reared at APHIS' National Biological Control Laboratory in Niles, MI.

APHIS Selects Students for 1890 USDA/Scholars Program

By Carolyn Gethers, Program Manager of Student and Recruitment Programs, HR

APHIS has selected two students —Cameron Bruett and Verneta Gaskins—as its recipients of the first USDA/1890 National Scholars Program in the Agricultural, Food, and Natural Resource Sciences. Bruett is a native of Omaha, NE, where he attended Benson High School and participated in several school and community activities, such as the National Honor Society, the Drug Free Club, the Black History Club, and the varsity football team. He also served as the President of the Student Government while maintaining a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 4.75/5.0. Bruett will attend Tuskegee University and major in pre-veterinary medicine.

Gaskins, APHIS' second selectee, is a native of Washington, DC, where she attended Benjamin Banneker Academic High School. Her activities include the National Honor Society, Student Government Association, the Chemistry Club, and Model United Nations. Gaskins' cumulative GPA is 3.5/5.0, and she will major in chemistry at the University of Maryland at Eastern Shore.

The USDA/1890 National Scholars Program was developed to further strengthen the long-term partnership between USDA and the 1890 Land Grant Institutions, to increase the enrollment of women and minorities studying agricultural, food, and natural resource sciences, and to provide career opportunities within USDA by offering scholarships to high school seniors. USDA agencies participating in the program provide selected students with full tuition, fees, books, personal computers, and software for a 4-year period, and the 1890 Institutions cover room-and-board expenses.

Approximately 1,200 high school students nationwide competed for the scholarships. The 1890 Institutions evaluated applications and each referred only their top 10–15 applicants to USDA for selection. In all, the 13 USDA participating agencies considered 212 applications and selected 44 USDA scholars.

Contact Carolyn Gethers in Recruitment and Development for more information. ◆

APHIS PHOTO BY BOB NICHOLS

On behalf of Acting Administrator Lonnie King, Recruitment and Development's Carolyn Gethers (right) presented Verneta Gaskins with a USDA/1890 National Scholars award at her school's honor awards ceremony in May. Acting Associate Administrator Terry Medley presented Cameron Bruett (not pictured) with his award on June 23 at the USDA orientation for scholars in Washington, DC.

Thinking of Going Back to Federal Work After Retirement?

By Linda Becker, Human Resources Operations

Are you contemplating working for the Federal Government after you retire? If you are, you should be aware that your Federal salary will be offset by your annuity.

For example, let's say that you will receive an annual annuity of $20,000. If you are reemployed as a GS-9/5 in 1993, your base salary would be $31,493. To calculate the salary offset, subtract your annual annuity ($20,000) from your base salary ($31,493). This leaves a balance of $11,493.

Divide $11,493 by 2,087 (the number of hours in a working year). This equals $5.51 per hour, which would be your hourly wage. The hourly wage is multiplied by the number of hours worked in a pay period to determine your actual salary.

Contact your Personnel Staffing Specialist for more information. ◆

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